

# Reach Out Now

PREVENT UNDERAGE ALCOHOL USE BY TALKING WITH YOUR SIXTH GRADERS

## Dear Teachers:

Teaching students. Talking with students. It's what you do every day. Your classroom is an important place for sixth graders to learn about and talk about the dangers of underage alcohol use. This program is an important prevention tool to help students stay safe, healthy, and educated.

This sixth-grade edition of **Reach Out Now** can help you talk with your students about the dangers of alcohol use and can help them discuss the issue with their families. It includes in-class lessons and activities that meet national standards in language arts, health, and science. It also promotes peer-to-peer learning and family interaction by building critical-thinking skills and good decision-making skills.

**Reach Out Now**, developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, includes important research-based information from prevention programs that are known to be effective. By teaching this important program, you can help your students make smart and healthy choices that last a lifetime.

### How to use this program:

1. Review the lessons.
2. Reproduce corresponding student reproducibles.
3. Distribute the Family Resource pages to students for them to share with their families.

*Charles G. Curie, SAMHSA Administrator,  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

## About 10.9 million adolescents ages 12–20 are underage alcohol drinkers!'

The above statement is more than just an alarming statistic. It represents a very real and current problem facing families, communities, and schools every day.

Students today are faced with a world of choices and bombarded daily by information from a variety of sources: peers, family, school, and the media. They need tools to help them interpret these messages as they make decisions and navigate an increasingly complex world. Recognizing that sixth graders are at a critical stage of social development—testing the waters of experience as they interact with their peers—this latest edition of **Reach Out Now** provides age-relevant activities and resources to help prevent underage alcohol use and build informed decision-making skills.

Now in its fourth year, the **Reach Out Now** program was developed in recognition of the fact that age 10 or 11 isn't too soon to begin discussing alcohol use and underage drinking. It provides teachers with interactive, standards-based science, health, and language arts lessons and activities that encourage dialogue in the classroom and at home about underage alcohol use. With critical information to help young people understand the effects of alcohol on the body and to help them learn to make informed, healthy decisions, the program is an important tool for teachers, parents, and youths themselves.

By encouraging discussion and dialogue, **Reach Out Now** for sixth-grade students continues to provide critical reinforcement of preventive messages. Even if your students participated in this program when they were in fifth grade, **Reach Out Now** for sixth grade will help foster thoughtful discussion as it raises awareness in your students of the dangers of underage alcohol use. We hope you will teach this important program and share its messages with your students and their families.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention  
[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)



# Lesson Overviews

*The following teacher instructions are for the lessons included in this program. Use them in conjunction with the student reproducibles. Then, send home the Family Resources to encourage family discussion.*

## 1 What Do You Know About Alcohol?

### National Education Standards

**Health:** Practices health-enhancing behaviors that reduce health risks; uses interpersonal communication skills to enhance health

**Science:** Understands that the human organism has systems for interaction and protection from disease; alcohol and drugs are often abused substances, change the way the body functions, and lead to addiction; toxic substances, some dietary habits, and personal behavior may be bad for one's health

**Language Arts:** Gathers and uses information for research purposes; uses general skills and strategies of the reading process; understands and interprets a variety of informational texts; communicates effectively with a variety of audiences for different purposes

**Principles of Effectiveness:**\* Enhances protective factors and reduces risk factors; teaches social competency and drug resistance skills; utilizes interactive versus didactic instruction; strengthens norms against drug use

### Prevention Factors\*\*

**Individual:** Problem-solving skills; cooperation; attachment to parents and other caring adults. **Family:** Parental involvement. **Peer:** Responsible behavior by peer/group leader

**School:** Create a sense of community in the classroom; youth participation, involvement, and responsibility in school tasks

**Students will:** Challenge their knowledge about alcohol and perform related research

**Time required:** 40 minutes

**Materials required:** Copies of **What Do You Know About Alcohol?** reproducible 1, pen, computer (if available), library books on alcohol-related topics

### Directions:

1. Distribute the reproducible. Provide ten minutes for students to complete the quiz.
2. Tell students that they are going to work in small groups to participate in a learning activity based on the quiz.
3. Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5 students. Have each group choose one student to lead them through the activity.
4. Assign one of the True/False statements from the quiz to each group so that students can conduct further research. Have each leader review the statement with his or her group and coordinate how the group will share responsibility for research. Leaders and their groups should develop a specific research topic based on the statement. Share the following list of facts to provide background information:
  - With the first sip of alcohol, the drinker is affected.
  - Alcohol passes through the lining of the stomach into the bloodstream. It can irritate the stomach lining, which can make the person feel sick. If drinking continues, the person may vomit.
  - Alcohol moves through the bloodstream to every organ in the body, including the brain.
  - Once alcohol enters the brain, it begins to change the way a person behaves. The ability to make decisions is affected. Alcohol can make people do things they usually don't do.
  - By drinking more and more alcohol, a person may lose balance and become unable to see or speak clearly. It can hurt how well a person does in school, in sports, or even in playing video games.
  - Alcohol can have lasting effects on the brain, impairing how well a person learns, thinks, and remembers. The more alcohol a person drinks, the worse the effects can be.
  - Alcohol can kill. When a person drinks too much alcohol in a very short period, alcohol poisoning can occur. Breathing gets difficult, and a person may vomit, pass out, or even die.

- Age, weight, height, and gender all affect how people react to alcohol. For young people whose bodies are still developing, the effects of even a little alcohol can be more intense than they are for older people. This is one reason that alcohol is illegal for people under 21 years of age.<sup>2</sup>

5. As a class, review students' answers. (All answers are true.)

## 2 What Do You Know About the Media?

### National Education Standards

**Health:** Practices health-enhancing behaviors that reduce health risks; uses interpersonal communication, goal-setting, and decision-making skills to enhance health

**Science:** Understands that toxic substances, some dietary habits, and personal behavior may be bad for one's health; individuals differ greatly in their ability to cope with stressful situations

**Language Arts:** Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing and reading process; understands and interprets a variety of informational texts; communicates effectively with a variety of audiences, for different purposes

**Principles of Effectiveness:**\* Enhances protective factors and reduces risk factors; teaches social competency and drug resistance skills; utilizes interactive versus didactic instruction; includes a family component; is family-focused; strengthens norms against drug use

### Prevention Factors\*\*

**Individual:** Problem-solving skills; cooperation; attachment to parents and other caring adults. **Family:** Parental involvement. **School:** Create a sense of community in the classroom; youth participation, involvement, and responsibility in school tasks

**Students will:** Use writing and communication skills to learn about how the media influences behavior

**Time required:** 40 minutes

**Materials required:** Copies of **What Do You Know About the Media?** reproducible 2, pen

### Directions:

1. Write the word *media* on the board. Have students think of words or phrases they associate with this word. Group responses into the categories of print (newspapers, magazines, billboards), video (movies, DVD/video games), audio (music), and new media (Internet).
2. Pair students. Have each pair discuss the following questions: *How much time do you spend using different forms of media? Which forms of media influence you the most? Does the media change the way you think about yourself, your friends, having fun, or how to deal with growing up?*
3. Define *media literacy* as having knowledge of the media and its messages. Discuss how the media disseminates information and targets messages to people of all ages. Ask students: Have you ever gone to a fast-food restaurant after seeing a commercial for it? Have you ever noticed products used in movies or videos? If yes, which ones? Have you ever used a new word that you first heard in a song or music video?
4. Distribute the reproducible. Explain to students that each step on the ladder explains one of five basic principles about media education. Have students follow the steps on the media literacy ladder to "read between the lines" in media messages.
5. After 15 minutes, ask one person from each pair to summarize their discussion and discuss what they have learned from this activity.

1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), *National Survey on Drug Use and Health*, 2003. 2. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), *Tips for Teens: The Truth About Alcohol*, 2004. \*National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). \*\*National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). Sources: National Council of Teacher of English (NCTE), National Research Council for Science Standards, Joint Committee for National School Health Education Standards.

# What Do You Know About Alcohol?

## RESEARCH/SCIENCE ACTIVITY

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

**1** *Directions: Circle "T" if the statement is TRUE. Circle "F" if the statement is FALSE.*

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Alcohol is a depressant; it makes you have less energy.   | T | F |
| 2. Alcohol dulls all of your five senses—sight, touch, hearing, smell, and taste.  | T | F |
| 3. Alcohol is absorbed into your bloodstream within 5 to 10 minutes.   | T | F |
| 4. One sign that a person may have a problem with alcohol is being forgetful about what happened while he or she was drinking. | T | F |
| 5. Alcohol use contributes to all of the top three causes of death for young people.   | T | F |
| 6. Alcohol use often is related to crime.  | T | F |

**2** *Directions: Work with your group leader to research and answer the question assigned to your group. Use the space below to brainstorm ideas and to record the results of your discussion.*

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Learn more about alcohol-related topics by checking out these great Web sites!

- <http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/features/kidsarea/kidsarea.aspx> (SAMHSA)
- [www.thecoolspot.gov](http://www.thecoolspot.gov) (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism)
- [www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/booklet.htm](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/booklet.htm) (NIAAA: *Alcoholism: Getting the Facts*)
- <http://ncadi.samhsa.gov> (SAMHSA: *Youth and Underage Drinking: An Overview and Tips for Teens*)

# What Do You Know About the Media?

## MEDIA LITERACY ACTIVITY

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

You are surrounded by the media. Whether you're shopping for clothes on the Internet, reading about current events in the newspaper, listening to song lyrics on the radio, or watching a movie, television show, or DVD, you are constantly seeing, hearing, and absorbing different messages. But have you ever stopped to "read between the lines" or ask the question: *What does it all mean?*

Here is a great way to organize and analyze the media messages you experience every day. Follow the steps on the media literacy ladder to think about the messages that interest you most and answer the questions that follow on a separate sheet of paper.

**Step 1: Identify a media message from a movie, magazine article, song lyric, or television show or commercial.**

**Step 2: Start at the bottom of the ladder and work your way to the top, answering the questions on each step as you go.**

**Step 3: Summarize the media message. Explain your opinions and discuss your conclusions. Ask: Is the message clear and consistent? Why or why not?**

### 5. Reality

Media messages represent the advertiser's social reality. What is the message-maker's point of view?

### 4. Interpretation

People interpret media messages differently. How does the message make you feel?

### 3. Construction

Each media message consists of different elements. What words, images, or sounds are used to create the message?

### 2. Purpose

Each media message has a purpose. Who created the message and why?

### 1. Form

Media messages come in different forms, including news broadcasts, billboards, or stickers—all of which shape the message. Through what medium is the message delivered?

EVALUATE

ANALYZE

IDENTIFY